

# Criminal Justice Studies

A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gjup20>

## Commercial sexual trafficking of males: A pilot training with law enforcement

Maureen C. Kenny, Claire Helpingstine, Haiying Long, Nathan Earl & Fayeza Malik

To cite this article: Maureen C. Kenny, Claire Helpingstine, Haiying Long, Nathan Earl & Fayeza Malik (2023): Commercial sexual trafficking of males: A pilot training with law enforcement, *Criminal Justice Studies*, DOI: [10.1080/1478601X.2023.2167079](https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2023.2167079)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2023.2167079>



Published online: 18 Jan 2023.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)






View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



# Commercial sexual trafficking of males: A pilot training with law enforcement

Maureen C. Kenny <sup>a</sup>, Claire Helpingstine <sup>a</sup>, Haiying Long <sup>b</sup>, Nathan Earl<sup>c</sup> and Fayeza Malik<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Psychology, College of Medicine, Florida International University, Miami, USA; <sup>b</sup>Educational Research, University of Kansas, Lawrence, USA; <sup>c</sup>School of Public Health, Yale University, New Haven, USA

## ABSTRACT

Law enforcement agents are often the first professionals to come into contact with victims of commercial sexual trafficking (CST). While they likely have encountered female victims of CST, they may need increased understanding of the identification of male victims. This study evaluated the effectiveness of a training program aimed to increase awareness of male victims of CST among law enforcement professionals. Participants' ( $N = 132$ ) knowledge level was examined prior to the training and immediately thereafter and results showed that pretest knowledge scores were low. The majority of participants (77%) did not have prior training in CST in males and there was a significant gain in knowledge from pre to posttest. None of the participants' demographic variables were significant predictors of pretest or posttest scores. Implications for training law enforcement in male CST are provided.

## ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 12 October 2022  
Accepted 7 January 2023

## KEYWORDS

Commercial sexual exploitation; male victims of abuse; trafficking; law enforcement

## Introduction

Research shows that a disproportionate number of victims of commercial sexual trafficking (CST) are females (Hossain & McAlpine, 2017; United Nations International Children's Fund, 2014, 2017) however, experts and researchers agree that this reflects a lack of awareness around the trafficking of males, as well as challenges identifying male CST victims. Consequently, most of the focus of law enforcement, media, mental and physical health service providers has centered around the commercial sexual victimization of females, often leaving male victims unidentified. The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA, 2013), the basis of the U.S. anti-human trafficking law, raised awareness regarding anti-trafficking and identifying those at risk, defined commercial sex, and strengthened services for victims. However, despite research findings indicating that males and females share similar vulnerabilities, including a past childhood history of abuse, family violence, and foster care (Cole, 2018; Florida Department of Children and Families, 2014), and rates of CST (Greenbaum, 2014; Walker, 2013), female victims tend to

**CONTACT** Maureen C. Kenny  [kennym@fu.edu](mailto:kennym@fu.edu)  Department of Psychology, Florida International University, Miami, Florida 33199, USA

Maureen C. Kenny, Department of Psychology, Florida International University; Claire Helpingstine, Department of Psychology, Florida International University; School of Public Health, Yale University, New Haven, USA; Fayeza Malik, College of Medicine, Florida International University.

be targeted by law enforcement, while male victims are overlooked (Swaner et al., 2016). Willis et al. (2013) found that law enforcement does not often recognize male victims as they are looking for the 'stereotypical female victim' (p. 9). These erroneous beliefs may lead to male victims not receiving protection and intervention. This lack of awareness of male victims of CST parallels the historic absence of attention to male victims of childhood sexual abuse. For years, lack of recognition of male victims of childhood sexual abuse in the literature rendered them almost invisible (Alaggia & Mishna, 2014; Easton, 2013).

### ***Prevalence of commercial sexual trafficking of males***

When thinking about male victims of CST, the majority of research focuses on minors as this is when they are most likely at risk to be victimized (Greenbaum, 2014). Prevalence is difficult to measure due to the secretive nature of the activity of traffickers and victims. Victims may understand their behavior to be illegal, fear arrest, and worry about retaliation by traffickers for disclosure (Renzetti et al., 2015). The prevalence of CST of males is particularly difficult due to the lack of appropriate screening by law enforcement and the assumption that boys are not generally victims of CST (Walker, 2013). In the U.S., the issue of determining prevalence rates of CST of males is further compounded by the lack of a uniform reporting system (United States Department of State, [USDS] 2010). Male victims are also prone to not self-identify due to fear and shame about being gay or being perceived as gay (Friedman, 2013). Unfortunately, poor identification of male victims of CST results in fewer available treatment and residential programs for this population (Reichart & Sylwestrzak, 2013).

### ***Risk factors associated with CST of males***

There are many factors that heighten the risk of sexual exploitation and CST for male minors. Boys at risk for CST include those who come from homes where there is conflict, substance abuse or other types of trauma including a history of childhood sexual abuse (Barnert et al., 2022; Cole, 2018; Friedman, 2013; Youth Collaboratory, 2018). Exposure to these childhood adversities and trauma without adequate support leaves male youth at risk for sexual exploitation (National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center, 2021). These traumatic experiences predispose boys towards early independence and, subsequently, participation in street life, unhealthy relationships, and engaging in high-risk behaviors. Boys who are in the foster care system or who are homeless are also at risk for CST (Varma et al., 2015). Homeless youth are particularly in peril for engaging in survival sex to attain food, money, or drugs (Srivastava et al., 2019). Compared to heterosexual peers, male minors who identify as gay or transgender are at a higher risk for sexual exploitation (Choi et al., 2015; Dank et al., 2015) Burns et al. (2015). When male youth come out to their families, they may be disowned and subsequently thrown out of their homes, leading to homelessness, and putting them at risk for sexual exploitation (Friedman, 2013).

### ***Law enforcement and CST***

Agents of the law may be among the first to come into contact with male victims of CST (National Research Council, 2014). Many male victims of CST (39%) are recovered through

police investigations (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, [NCMEC] 2018). These male victims often have endangerment issues (e.g. weapons, drugs/alcohol, gang involvement) that may bring them to the attention of law enforcement (NCMEC, 2018). Additional issues such as charges of theft, truancy, running away from home, providing law enforcement with false identification (for which males may be picked up) may be more indicative of CST than intentional criminal behavior (Andretta et al., 2016; Finklea et al., 2015; Reid & Piquero, 2014; Saar et al., 2015). Despite law enforcement's encounters with male victims, they may lack training to identify victims as such. According to *End Child Prostitution and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes* (Friedman, 2013), key informants pointed out that few law enforcement agents believe boys can be CST victims. Many of the juvenile boys arrested on other charges are rarely screened for CST, unlike girls who are regularly screened for CST, and referred to services (Cole, 2018). This highlights the need for training on identification for male victims of CST especially among law enforcement personnel and community agency professionals.

Minor male victims of CST are less likely to be recognized for a number of reasons. These may include feelings of shame and guilt and a lack of training for professionals in screening for male victims specifically. The issue of preconceived biases only continues to hinder the capability of law enforcement officers in identifying and helping these victims (Halter, 2010; Renzetti et al., 2015). In a review of 19 studies, Hampton and Lieggi (2020) found that victims of CST often reported negative and abusive interactions with law enforcement including failure to assist when asked, harassment, entrapment, rape, quid pro quo sex acts, or forced informing to avoid arrest. While some youth reported positive experiences, including being rescued and helped, overall, there was a sense of youth mistrusting the police.

### ***Training with law enforcement***

A reason for the lack of knowledge among law enforcement regarding CST is that not all states require training. As of 2022, only 38 states mandated or encouraged law enforcement training on CST (National Conferences of State, 2022). In general, it has been found that few law enforcement officials receive training in CST (Farrell & Pfeffer, 2014). Mapp et al. (2016) found that only 17% of their sample of police officers reported receiving training on CST. Of their sample of 175 officers, only one officer recognized that males could be victims of CST. The authors conclude that since police officers are primarily male, they may be less likely to perceive a male as a victim of CST. However, they found officers with training to possess more accurate knowledge of CST than those without or those who rely on mass media. Farrell et al. (2015) found that most of the officers in their study who were working with CST victims had no formal training in the area, and some did not believe that U.S. citizens could be commercially sexually exploited. Some training with police has focused on CST, but lacks emphasis on male victims, and with limited rates of success. For example, following a 4-hour training on CST, Renzetti et al. (2015) reported small changes in executive level officers' perceptions of CST but no changes for midlevel officers.

Previous research has found that trainings that specifically highlight CST of males and common risk-factors among this population have resulted in greater rates of identification of male CST victims (deBaca & Perez, 2013). The positive implications of these past studies

suggest that training for law enforcement centered on male CST victims could improve the identification of CST victims and boys at-risk and increase their referral to specialized services.

### ***Purpose of study***

This study sought to evaluate whether an introductory training on CST of males would be beneficial in helping law enforcement participants attain knowledge in victim identification and provision of appropriate services. Although other studies have reported on the effectiveness of community-based training of CST, to the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to report on a training for law enforcement on male victims of CST. As the field does not have information about the effectiveness of CST educational trainings with law enforcement, this study adds to the literature base. In addition, this study employed a male survivor of CST as the trainer and in the role of researcher. There has been a call to action to include survivors' voices in research on the topic of CST and these authors worked collaboratively on this project.

## **Methods**

### ***Participants***

Participants were recruited at a regional conference for law enforcement professionals held in early 2020 prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The conference is dedicated to increasing the capacity of law enforcement by providing training, certification, and continuing education. The live training was 2-hours and intended to provide law enforcement professionals with an introduction to the necessary information to identify and respond appropriately to male and LGBTQ victims of CST. (For details about the training, please contact the first author.) Out of the 450 law enforcement professionals attending, 227 chose to participate in the study. From the 227 participants who attended the training, 172 participants (76%) completed the pretest and 176 (77%) completed the posttest. Of these participants, 132 paired matches (77%) were obtained for the pre and posttest. The discrepancy in numbers of tests is attributed to some participants arriving late to the training and others leaving early, thus not completing both assessments. See [Table 1](#) for full demographics of the sample. The sample consisted of 64% males between the ages of 23 and 64 ( $M = 38.18$ ,  $SD = 8.92$ ).

### ***Procedure***

A university's Institutional Review Board granted approval for this project (IRB#16-0016). The pre and posttests were placed on the tables where the participants sat during the workshop. The 4<sup>th</sup> author made an announcement prior to the start of the training about the assessments and allowed several minutes for participants to complete. The same procedure was followed at the end of the training. At the end of the workshop, assessments were gathered from the tables.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of law enforcement professionals in percentages ( $N = 227$ ).

	%
<b>Racial Identity</b>	
White/Non-Hispanic	67
Latino	22
Black/African-American	5
Asian	4
Other	2
<b>Education</b>	
Bachelor's degree	54
Associates degree	19
High school diploma	14
Graduate degree	13
<b>Time spent in current Job</b>	
Less than one year	4
One to five years	30
Five to ten years	19
Ten to twenty years	34
More than twenty years	12
<b>Encountered victim of CST's gender</b>	
Male	11
Female	49

### **Measure**

This study utilized a test created by the researchers, based on the literature (Dank et al., 2015; Friedman, 2013; Jones, 2010) and contained 11 questions examining knowledge of male victims of CST. The test covered five domains, including three questions testing recruitment, four questions testing recovery, one question testing gaps in services/treatment, one question testing sexuality, and two questions testing CST involvement. Some questions were true/false while others were multiple-choice questions with only one correct answer. A correct answer was scored 1, while an incorrect answer was scored 0. All questions in the tests were examined by experts in the field, thus having good validity evidence based on test contents. The test was administered to participants before and after the training. To estimate the reliability of the test, a test–retest correlation coefficient was calculated with an unrelated sample. Cronbach's alpha was deemed inappropriate because there were just correct/incorrect answers. Results showed that the correlation coefficient of the test was .61. Although it was lower than the traditional criterion of adequate Cronbach's alpha (i.e. .70), it is considered adequate because correlation coefficient is usually lower than other types of reliability coefficient (Cicchetti, 1994).

In addition to the 11 test items, the pre-test also gathered participants' demographic information, including gender, ethnicity, prior training hours, years in the current job, and whether male or female victim services were involved in participants' job. In the post-test, four statements assessing the quality and usefulness of the training were also added to the 11 test items. These four questions addressed the overall quality of the training, the usefulness of the content to the participants' job, the quality of handouts and print materials, and quality of the activities and discussions during the training. Participants were asked to rate these four items on a 10-item scale ranging from 'Very poor' to 'Very

good.' Finally, a supplementary space was included in the posttest to provide participants with the opportunity to share any additional thoughts and comments about the training.

## Analysis

### Data analyses

IBM SPSS 28.0 was used to clean and analyze the quantitative data. Data were examined for errors and mismatched data were cleaned prior to analysis. Pre- and post-scores of all items and items measuring each domain of the knowledge were calculated by using their sum. Descriptive statistics were utilized to summarize participant demographic information and responses regarding training satisfaction. A paired samples t-test was used to examine the change in participant knowledge between pre-test and post-test. Multiple linear regression analyses were conducted to examine whether participants' demographics and background significantly predicted their pre-test score, post-test score, and pre-post score difference.

## Results

A paired samples t-test was employed to assess changes in knowledge in each test item and aggregated total test scores before and after the CST training (see Table 2). Results demonstrated that participants scored significantly higher in post-test than in pre-test in 8 out of 11 test items and total scores. Interestingly, participants scored significantly lower in the post-test than in the pre-test in item 10 ('Males who run away come home on their own' T/F). Six items' pre-post score differences and pre-post total score differences had higher than medium effect size (i.e. > .50). The effect size of pre-post total score differences was 1.14, showing a very strong training effect on increasing participants' knowledge. In terms of pre- and post-score difference in each domain, participants did not show significant difference in only one domain, gaps in services/treatment. The effect sizes in domains of recruitment, CST involvement, and recovery were either close to medium or

**Table 2.** Pre- and Post-Test Knowledge Change in Test Items.

Question (Category)	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference	Effect Size (Cohen's d)	95% CI of Cohen's d
Q1 (Recovery)	0.08	0.24	0.16**	0.35	0.17, 0.53
Q2 (Recovery)	1.00	0.99	-0.01	0.09	-0.09, 0.26
Q3(Recruitment)	0.49	0.89	0.40**	0.69	0.50, 0.88
Q4(CST Involvement)	0.38	0.75	0.37**	0.67	0.48, 0.86
Q5(Recruitment)	0.71	0.88	0.17**	0.39	0.21, 0.57
Q6 (Sexuality)	0.35	0.51	0.16*	0.24	0.07, 0.41
Q7 (Services)	0.98	0.93	-0.05	0.15	-0.02, 0.33
Q8 (Recovery)	0.23	0.80	0.57**	1.02	0.81, 1.24
Q9(Recruitment)	0.51	0.65	0.14*	0.26	0.08, 0.43
Q10 (Recovery)	0.67	0.34	-0.33**	0.60	0.42, 0.79
Q11(CST Involvement)	0.20	0.70	0.50**	0.85	0.65, 1.05
Recruitment(Q3,5,9)	1.71	2.43	0.72**	0.69	0.50, 0.89
CST (Q4, 11)	0.58	1.45	0.87**	1.06	0.84, 1.27
Recovery (Q1, 2, 8, 10)	1.98	2.37	0.39**	0.48	0.30, 0.66
Total	5.61	7.68	2.07**	1.14	0.92, 1.36

Valid  $N = 130$ ; CI = Confidence Interval; Difference is calculated by subtracting the pre-test score from the post-test score. A positive difference score indicates an increase in knowledge for this test item. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .001$  (all 2-tailed).

higher than medium. Regression analyses indicated that none of participants' background variables were significant predictors of the pre-test, post-test, and pre- post-test difference scores, suggesting that participants' pre-test and post-test scores were similar, regardless of their background and that the training effect on participants was robust, without being influenced by their background.

### ***Satisfaction with training***

Of those that gave feedback on the training itself ( $n = 127$ ), 91% of participants found the training to be 'good' or 'very good,' and 83% found the training to be relevant to their jobs. Twenty-three percent of the total sample ( $n = 34$ ) responded to the supplemental feedback/comments section at the conclusion of the posttest. Many of the participants discussed positive qualities of the trainer. In these responses, participants noted that the training brought an awareness of CST among males that was not already present. One respondent aptly described this by stating, 'Most people don't believe males can be trafficked. Very helpful and opened my eyes to males as victims.' Not all responses to the open-ended comments section were positive. Participants who had negative feedback discussed some issues with the relevancy of the training to law enforcement. In these cases, participants mentioned that the presentation included too many statistics on CST among men and felt that the presentation lacked specific applications to law enforcement.

### **Discussion**

Using a sample of law enforcement agents from around the US and Canada, this study demonstrated the lack of training regarding male CST victims for this population. Only a small minority of the sample reported prior training (23%), consisting of minimal hours. This is in spite of the majority of the sample having received a college or advanced degree (67%). Additionally, time in their position did not affect pretest scores. Clearly, this topic may not be covered in their formal studies or law enforcement training. Our results confirm Vieth's (2006) and Mapp's et al. (2016) results that law enforcement professionals and their agencies often lack the necessary training to respond to these vulnerable victims.

There was a statistically significant change in knowledge scores for participants from pre to posttesting, demonstrating that they gained some knowledge about male CST. These changes were irrespective of past training, and other demographic characteristics. For those who reported previous training, this training was not predictive of pretest scores. This indicates several possibilities. One, the information in this training was different from the information in the past trainings. Second, the participants may not have retained the information from their previous training. Either explanation provides support for additional training. Evaluation of this training is a first step in recognizing the importance of awareness building of this material to law enforcement.

In general, the trainer received high praise from the participants, and this may be partly due to his status as a survivor of CST. Sharing personal, lived experience may have assisted in demonstrating the concepts of the training. The authors recognize the immeasurable effects of a trainer with lived and professional experience, and it is unclear if the same



results would be found with a less qualified trainer. Survivor input in training and work with victims is increasingly recognized as critical (Lloyd, 2012). It should be noted, however, that some participants, reported that the training was not relevant to their work in law enforcement. Participants reported that there was not enough practical information for how law enforcement could identify and engage these victims. It may be that for those attendants, their work does not bring them into regular contact with victims of CST (More than half reported having never encountered a female victim of CST and even less encountered a male victim). One participant stated there was too much material on statistics and not enough on identification of victims. This feedback can be used to modify the training and increase information on the signs and symptoms of victims or improve the manner in which this information is shared. Including information that would be more relevant to law enforcement's role with CST victims could improve the training.

The National Research Council (2014) found that most law enforcement agents reported challenges communicating with victims of CST (who may be resistant and uncooperative) and difficulty identifying victims of CST. Without proper training, law enforcement relies on information they see in the media or popular myths (Farrell et al., 2015). However, Swaner et al. (2016) found that most referrals to service agencies come from law enforcement, juvenile courts, and district attorney's offices, but this may be limited to female victims. These inconsistencies would have to be evaluated in future research.

This study on training is critical as it appears to be the first evaluation of male CST training, led by a male survivor of CST, for law enforcement. Law enforcement officers are in the front lines of detecting the signs of CST on the streets. However, without training and education on CST, particularly in males and sexual minority victims, law enforcement officers may not recognize it. Without proper training, law enforcement rely on information they see in the media or popular myths of CST (Farrell et al., 2015). Desilit (2019), a law enforcement officer and trainer in CST, reports on how the lack of training of officers leads to missed opportunities for identification and intervention with victims. She states, 'one of the biggest hurdles is getting our law enforcement officers to recognize a prostitute as a victim, particularly our narcotic investigators who strive to develop confidential informants' (para 10). Education and awareness of the crime of CST is one of the first steps in eradicating this criminal enterprise. Officers on routine patrol may encounter a situation involving CST, but due to a lack of awareness or training, they might not recognize the situation as a crime and, therefore, fail to make inquiries or take appropriate action to intervene (Police Chief, 2014).

### ***Future training recommendations***

Given the prevalence of male victims of CST and the likelihood that law enforcement will come into contact with these victims, training in identification is critical. Training can equip officers to identify victims, respond appropriately, conduct a proper investigation, and make appropriate referrals for services (National Research Council, 2014). Renzetti et al. (2015) suggested that training may vary based on the type of officer (e.g. front line, executive) and that training could be integrated into police academy, in-service training, or more detailed for those who serve on task forces for CST. In areas where an expert may

not be available to train law enforcement, online options could be utilized. For example, the Polaris Project has an extensive online training (<http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/>

[national-human-trafficking-hotline/access-training/online-training](http://www.polarisproject.org/what-we-do/national-human-trafficking-hotline/access-training/online-training)). The National Criminal Justice Training Center (<https://ncjtc.fvtc.edu/>) has a variety of online trainings including one entitled, *Boys: The Forgotten Sex Trafficking Victim*, which can be watched on-demand. There are many commercial programs available for training and agencies may need to budget for offering these to their staff. For example, Homeland Security offers a one-day workshops focused on human trafficking, but it may not adequately cover males and sexual minority youth.

Information on CST, particularly CST in minority populations, can be included in Police Academy training. Further, states can mandate required training in the area of CST, as they have done with domestic violence (Desilit, 2019). Training needs to focus on changes in knowledge but also attitudes toward victims, as well as effectiveness in handling cases of CST. The involvement of law enforcement on multidisciplinary teams for CST also increases their understanding of the victims through interactions with mental health and social workers who are often treating these victims. Through training, law enforcement can become trauma-informed, and through training that is survivor informed and led, can shift their view of sex workers to understanding their plights at victims of CST. This training program was led by a survivor who was able to share his story and lived experience. Greater involvement of survivors, who are comfortable sharing their stories, and are committed to training others is critical to raising awareness.

### ***Key training components***

Ensuring that victims are identified as such and referred to the proper services is an important first step in their recovery from trafficking. Research has shown that sexually exploited youth may not accept services if they feel judged or discriminated against, thus affecting their ability to get needed services (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2018). Therefore, training those who first come into contact with victims to respond in a non-judgmental manner will be critical to subsequent willingness of victims to seek care. Law enforcement should also understand that victims fear legal consequences in their encounters with professionals (Garg et al., 2020) and may not identify themselves as victims (Mapp et al., 2016). The shift from viewing CST youth as victims and not offenders should be emphasized in training, as Halter (2010) found that 60% of CST youth cases from police agencies in six US cities were treated as victims and 40% treated as offenders. Law enforcement needs training that helps them understand that the ploys used by traffickers often make their victims fearful of asking for help, even in very public spaces. While a victim may at first appear 'willing', this attitude may be a result of the tactics used by traffickers where the victim is threatened, denied basic human rights, and subjected to false promises.

### ***Limitations***

These results are preliminary and emphasize the need for replication with more rigorous research methods and a larger representative sample of law enforcement agents. We did

not collect data on the extent of professionals' experience with CST, so it is possible that some branches or levels of law enforcement professionals have greater training, given their geographical area and scope of work. Understanding that knowledge acquisition does not equate to behavioral change (Kirkpatrick, 1967), future research could examine changes in beliefs, practice, and behaviors after participation in CST trainings. We would inquire about opportunities to apply the knowledge gained in the training to their work in a research design that includes testing at various points, post training. Another limitation of the study is that we used an instrument that was specifically developed for this project given that there are no known existing measures for the same purpose, and no known research in this area. Additionally, law enforcement agents self-selected to attend this training, among others offered at the conference, so they may have been more interested in the topic. The training was limited to 2 hours and a more robust training could provide more in-depth training. Finally, the negative feedback about the training should be considered when developing future programs for law enforcement.

## Conclusion

As suggested by Friedman (2013), this training sought to raise awareness among law-enforcement officers that males can be victims in the sex trade. This study demonstrated that in-person training on male CST victims can lead to an increase in knowledge among law enforcement agents. Given the moderate level of knowledge of participants and the lack of previous training prior to the training, it is clear that training is needed. Implementing this training for law enforcement who come into contact with victims of CST is imperative in order to recognize these victims as such when they are encountered in criminal situations. Understanding the prevalence of male victims of CST as well as ways to connect them to appropriate community resources may assist law enforcement with proper identification and thus potentially facilitate appropriate treatment and service provision.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## ORCID

Maureen C. Kenny  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5859-2913>

Claire Helpingstine  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9499-0040>

Haiying Long  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6563-5291>

## References

- Alaggia, R., & Mishna, F. (2014). Self-psychology and male child sexual abuse: Healing relational betrayal. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 42(1), 41–48. doi:10.1007/s10615-013-0453-2
- Andretta, J.R., Woodland, M.H., Watkins, K.M., & Barnes, M.E. (2016). Towards the discreet identification of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) victims and individualized interventions: science to practice. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 22(3), 260–270. doi:10.1037/law0000087

- Barnert, E.S., Bath, E., Heard-Garris, N., Lee, J., Guerrero, A., Biely, C., . . . Dudovitz, R. (2022). Commercial sexual exploitation during adolescence: A US-Based national study of adolescent to adult health. *Public Health Reports*, 137(1\_suppl), 53S–62S. doi:10.1177/00333549211054082
- Burns, M.N., Ryan, D.T., Garofalo, R., Newcomb, M.E., & Mustanski, B. (2015). Mental health disorders in young urban sexual minority men. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(1), 52–58. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.07.018
- Choi, S.K., Wilson, B.D., Shelton, J., & Gates, G.J. (2015). Serving our youth 2015: The needs and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth experiencing homelessness. The Williams Institute with True Colors Fund and The Palette Fund. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/1pd9886n>
- Cicchetti, D.V. (1994). Guidelines, criteria, and rules of thumb for evaluating normed and standardized assessment instruments in psychology. *Psychological Assessment*, 6(4), 284–290. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.6.4.284
- Cole, J. (2018). Service providers' perspectives on sex trafficking of male minors: Comparing background and trafficking situations of male and female victims. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 35(4), 423–433. doi:10.1007/s10560-018-0530-z
- Dank, M., Yahner, J., Madden, K., Banuelos, I., Yu, L., Ritchie, A. . . . Conner, B. (2015). Surviving the streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YSWW engaged in survival sex. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42186/2000119-Surviving-the-Streets-of-New-York.pdf>
- deBaca, L., & Perez, T. (2013). Doubling down on the fight against human trafficking, the white house blog Retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2013/03/07/doubling-down-fight-against-human-trafficking>
- Desilit, C. (2019). Stopping human trafficking on the law enforcement front lines. Retrieved from <https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/education-and-training/stopping-human-trafficking-on-the-law-enforcement-front-lines/>
- Easton, S.D. (2013). Disclosure of child sexual abuse among adult male survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 41(4), 344–355. doi:10.1007/s10615-012-0420-3
- Farrell, A., & Pfeffer, R. (2014). Policing human trafficking: Cultural blinders and organizational barriers. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 653(1), 46–64. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716213515835>
- Farrell, A., Pfeffer, R., & Bright, K. (2015). Police perceptions of human trafficking. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 38(3), 315–333. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2014.995412
- Finklea, K., Fernandes-Alcantara, A.L., & Siskin, A. (2015). *Domestic human trafficking legislation in the 114th Congress*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- Florida Department of Children and Families & Department of Juvenile Justice (2014). Restoring our kids: An analysis of Florida's continuum of care and recommendations to improve services for commercially sexually exploited children. *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Services Workgroup*. Retrieved from <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/docs/comm/restoring-our-kids12-17-14.pdf?sfvrsn=2>
- Friedman, S.A. (2013). *And boys too. End Child Prostitution and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes [ECPAT]*. Brooklyn, NY: ECPAT. Retrieved from [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594970e91b631b3571be12e2/t/5977b2dacd0f688b2b89e6f0/1501016795183/ECPAT-USA\\_AndBoysToo.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/594970e91b631b3571be12e2/t/5977b2dacd0f688b2b89e6f0/1501016795183/ECPAT-USA_AndBoysToo.pdf)
- Garg, A., Panda, P., Neudecker, M., & Lee, S. (2020). Barriers to the access and utilization of healthcare for trafficked youth: A systematic review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 100, 100. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104137>
- Greenbaum, V.J. (2014). Commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children in the United States. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 44(9), 245–269. doi:10.1016/j.cpped.2014.07.001
- Halter, S. (2010). Factors that influence police conceptualizations of girls involved in prostitution in six U.S. cities: Child sexual exploitation victims or delinquents? *Child Maltreatment*, 15(2), 152–160. doi:10.1177/1077559509355315

- Hampton, M.D., & Lieggi, M. (2020). Commercial sexual exploitation of youth in the United States: A qualitative systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse, 21*(1), 57–70. doi:10.1177/1524838017742168
- Hossain, M., & McAlpine, A. (2017). *Gender based violence research methodologies in humanitarian settings: An evidence review and recommendations*. Elhra: Cardiff. Retrieved from [https://researchonline.lsicstm.ac.uk/id/eprint/4461786/1/Gender%20Based%20Violence%20Research\\_GOLD%20VoR.pdf](https://researchonline.lsicstm.ac.uk/id/eprint/4461786/1/Gender%20Based%20Violence%20Research_GOLD%20VoR.pdf)
- Ijadi-Maghsoodi, R., Bath, E., Cook, M., Textor, L., & Barnert, E. (2018). Commercially sexually exploited youths' health care experiences, barriers, and recommendations: A qualitative analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 76*, 334–341. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.11.002
- Jones, S.V. (2010). The invisible man: The conscious neglect of men and boys in the war on human trafficking. *Utah law review*, 1143. Retrieved from <https://dc.law.utah.edu/ulr/>
- Kirkpatrick, D.L. (1967). Evaluation of training. In R.L. Craig & L.R. Bittel (Eds.), *Training and development handbook: A guide to human resources development*. McGraw-Hill. doi:10.3928/01484834-20180618-03
- Lloyd, R. (2012). *Girls like us: Fighting for a world where girls are not for sale, an activist finds her calling and heals herself*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Mapp, S., Hornung, E., D'Almeida, M., & Juhnke, J. (2016). Local law enforcement officers' knowledge of human trafficking: Ability to define, identify, and assist. *Journal of Human Trafficking, 2*(4), 329–342. doi:10.1080/23322705.2016.1143764
- National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (2018). An analysis of missing male victims of Child Sex Trafficking (CST). Retrieved from [https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/ncmec-analysis/Missing%20Male%20Victims%20of%20Child%20Sex%20Trafficking\\_EXTERNAL.PDF](https://www.missingkids.org/content/dam/missingkids/pdfs/ncmec-analysis/Missing%20Male%20Victims%20of%20Child%20Sex%20Trafficking_EXTERNAL.PDF)
- National Conferences of State (2022). Human trafficking state laws. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/human-trafficking-laws.aspx>
- National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center (2021). How to improve services for males experiencing trafficking. Retrieved from [https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/How%20to%20Improve%20Services%20for%20Males%20Experiencing%20Trafficking\\_508\\_Final\\_2.pdf](https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/2021-11/How%20to%20Improve%20Services%20for%20Males%20Experiencing%20Trafficking_508_Final_2.pdf)
- National Research Council. (2014). *Confronting commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of minors in the United States: A guide for the legal sector*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi:10.17226/18969
- Police Chief (2014, July). Human Trafficking 101 for Law Enforcement. Retrieved from <https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/human-trafficking-101-for-law-enforcement1/>
- Reichart, J., & Sylwestrzak, A. (2013). *National survey of residential programs for victims of sex trafficking*. Chicago, Illinois: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.
- Reid, J.A., & Piquero, A.R. (2014). Age-graded risks for commercial sexual exploitation of male and female youth. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 29*(9), 1747–1777. doi:10.1177/0886260513511535
- Renzetti, C., Bush, A., Castellanos, M., & Hunt, G. (2015). Does training make a difference? An evaluation of a specialized human trafficking training module for law enforcement officers. *Journal of Crime and Justice, 38*(3), 334–350. doi:10.1080/0735648X.2014.997913
- Saar, M.S., Epstein, R., Rosenthal, L., & Vafa, Y. (2015). *The sexual abuse to prison pipeline: The girls' story*. Washington, DC: Center for Poverty and Inequality Georgetown Law.
- Srivastava, A., Rusow, J.A., Holguin, M., Semborski, S., Onasch-Vera, L., Wilson, N., & Rice, E. (2019). Exchange and survival sex, dating apps, gender identity, and sexual orientation among homeless youth in Los Angeles. *The Journal of Primary Prevention, 40*(5), 561–568. doi:10.1007/s10935-019-00561-4
- Swaner, R., Labriola, M., Rempel, M., Walker, A., & Spadafore, J. (2016). *Youth involvement in the sex trade: A national study*. New York: Center for Court Innovation.
- Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013. (2013–2014). H.R.898 – 113th Congress. (2013–2014). Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/898/text>
- United Nations International Children's Fund. (2014). *Hidden in plain sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children*. New York, NY: UNICEF.

- United Nations International Children's Fund. (2017). *A Familiar face: Violence in the lives of children and adolescents*. New York, NY: UNICEF.
- United States Department of State (2010). Trafficking in persons report. Washington, DC: U.S.
- Varma, S., Gillespie, S., McCracken, C., & Greenbaum, V.J. (2015). Characteristics of child commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking victims presenting for medical care in the United States. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 44, 98–105. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.04.004
- Vieth, V.I. (2006). Unto the third generation. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 12(3–4), 5–54. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J146v12n03\\_02](http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J146v12n03_02)
- Walker, K. (2013). *Ending the commercial sexual exploitation of children: A call for multi- system collaboration in California*. CA: Child Welfare Council. Retrieved from [http://www.heatwatch.org/resources/files/Ending\\_CSEC\\_Multidisc\\_Responses\\_in\\_CA\\_CCWC.pdf](http://www.heatwatch.org/resources/files/Ending_CSEC_Multidisc_Responses_in_CA_CCWC.pdf)
- Willis, G.M., Malinen, S., & Johnston, L. (2013). Demographic differences in public attitudes towards sex offenders. *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, 20(2), 230–247. doi:10.1080/13218719.2012.658206
- Youth Collaboratory (2018). Boys and CSEC. Retrieved from <https://www.youthcollaboratory.org/resource/boys-csec>